

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 05275 141327Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6444
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 05275

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: JBOR, EAID, JO, US, IS
SUBJECT: WEST BANK WATER RESOURCES STUDY

REF: STATE 135358

1. IN PAST FEW DAYS WE HAVE HAD LENGTHY INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH OMAR ABDULLAH OF JVA AND HANNA ODEH OF THE NPC ON SCOPE OF PROPOSED WEST BANK WATER RESOURCES STUDY, DRAWING ON REFTEL. BOTH HAD STRONG RESERVATIONS ON STUDY.

2. THEY ARE APPREHENSIVE OF ISRAELI INTENTIONS AND ATTITUDES WITH REGARD TO JORDANIAN WATER RESOURCES IN GENERAL AND MAQARIN PROJECT IN PARTICULAR. THEY FEEL THAT STUDY OF THE WEST BANK MAY PROVIDE MEANS FOR ISRAELIS TO ASSERT FULL AND EFFICIENT WATER USE AND MAKECLAIM THAT WEST BANK MUST BE SUPPLIED TOTALLY FROM EAST BANK. THEY ALSO FEAR LINKAGE WITH MAQARIN PROJECT AND CONCERNED THAT ISRAELIS WOULD USE STUDY AS JUSTIFICATION TO IMPEDE MAQARIN. WE HAVE COUNTERED BY URGING CONTINUED COOPERATION AND A FORTHCOMING POSTURE FROM JORDAN AS BEST STRATEGY FOR THEM TO PURSUE AND STATED THAT IF ISRAELIS
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WANTED TO ATTEMPT TO BLOCK MAQARIN THEY WOULDNOT NEED TO USE THE STUDY TO DO SO.

3. THEY AND WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE FORMULATION: THAT IF GOJ WERE TO AGREE TO STUDY IT SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO WEST BANK, BUT SHOULD ALSO FOR BALANCE INCLUDE EAST BANK. THEY POINTED OUT THAT STUDY OF

WEST BANK BOUND TO SHOW LARGE WATER DEFICIT; PARALLEL STUDY OF EAST BANK WOULD SHOW SIMILAR DEFICIT AND AVOID ANY ASSUMPTION THAT EXTENSIVE WATER RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM EAST BANK WERE EXCLUSIVELY TO PROVIDE FOR WEST BANK WE SEE CONSIDERABLE VALUE IN SUCH A SUB-REGIONAL APPROACH.

4. SCOPE OF STUDY CLEARLY GIVING GOJ PROBLEMS, AND IT LIKELY THEY WILL NEED TIME TO THRESH THEM OUT, PROCESS WHICH WILL BE LENGTHENED BY ABSENCE OF OMAR ABDULLAH WHO DEPARTING TODAY FOR U.S. HE RETURNS ABOUT JULY 1. THEREFORE, WHILE WE WOULD WELCOME TAUBENBLATT VISIT, IT PRE-MATURE AT THIS TIME. WE BELIEVE IT BEST TO ALLOW GOJ TO FURTHER CONSIDER SCOPE OF STUDY AND TO FORWARD GOJ COMMENTS TO DEPARTMENT AND TEL AVIV FOR REVIEW BEFORE WE ENGAGE IN ANY FORMAL CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS IN TAUBENBLATT VISIT HERE.PICKERING

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